

Assistant Attorney General
Office of Legislative Affairs
Attention: Mr. Jack Perkins

July 14, 1986

Director, FBI

REQUEST FROM LEE H. HAMILTON, CHAIRMAN, HOUSE PERMANENT
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE FOR A REPORT ON THE
TARGETING OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS BY INTERNATIONAL
TERRORIST GROUPS

ACTION MEMORANDUM

The enclosed responds to a letter from the Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to the Attorney General dated May 8, 1986 requesting a report from the Attorney General regarding the targeting of United States citizens by international terrorist groups. Please review our letter to the Committee and forward it to Congressman Hamilton. A copy is enclosed for your records.

Enclosures (8)

1 - Mr. Clarke - Enclosures (2)
 (Attn: Mr. Harley)
1 - Mr. Baker
1 - Mr. Scheiber - Enclosures (2)
1 - Mr. Pomerantz - Enclosures (2)
1 - Mr. O'Brien - Enclosures (2)
3 - Mr. Rissler - Enclosures (2)
1 - Mr. Moran - Enclosures (2)
RAM:cae (10)

SA ROBERT A. MORAN
Room 7240, TL-245

Honorable Lee H. Hamilton
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your letter to the Attorney General dated May 8, 1986 requesting a report on the targeting of United States citizens by international terrorist groups for violence. The enclosed summary memorandum is responsive to your request.

If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours,

John R. Bolton
Assistant Attorney General
Office of Legislative Affairs

Enclosure

- 1 - Assistant Attorney General - Enclosure
Office of Legislative Affairs
Attention: Mr. Jack Perkins
 - 1 - Assistant Attorney General - Enclosure
Office of Legal Counsel
Attention: Mr. Douglas W. Kmiec
 - 1 - Counsel for Intelligence Policy - Enclosure
Attention: Ms. Mary C. Lawton
 - 1 - Mr. Clarke
(Attn: Mr. Harley)
 - 1 - Mr. Baker
 - 1 - Mr. Scheiber
 - 1 - Mr. Pomerantz
 - 1 - Mr. O'Brien
 - 3 - Mr. Rissler
 - 1 - Mr. Moran
- NOTE: Based on Criminal Investigative Division addendum dated 6/20/86.
RAM:cae (10)

SA ROBERT A. MORAN
Room 7240, TL-245

REQUEST FROM LEE H. HAMILTON, CHAIRMAN, HOUSE PERMANENT
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE REGARDING THE TARGETING OF
UNITED STATES CITIZENS BY INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST GROUPS.

Elements of international terrorist groups present in the United States have not generally undertaken violent action against United States citizens or specific United States targets. The principal activities of these elements have been confined to fund raising, proselytizing, intelligence gathering, and carrying out of actions against members of the elements' nationality who are seen as "dissidents," as well as against other nationality groups thought to have perpetrated past injustices. Examples of actions taken would be plots by Libyan terrorists to kill anti-Qadhafi Libyans in the United States and murders of Turkish officials in the United States by Armenian terrorists, respectively.

FBI analysis has concluded that the level of terrorist violence against United States citizens and interests within the United States has not kept pace with levels abroad chiefly because of effective intelligence and law enforcement measures as well as a strong perception that an adequate number of easily accessible United States targets are available abroad. As United States targets abroad are hardened, or made more difficult to attack, there may be more of an incentive to move the locus of terrorism to the United States itself.

The most likely source of such attacks, should they occur, would be those nations which sponsor terrorism as an essential element of their foreign policy. Such states include Libya, Iran, and Syria, all of whom could conceivably arrange commission of violence by their countrymen or by surrogates such as Palestinian terrorists or Muslim extremists. In varying degrees of sophistication each of these countries has an infrastructure in the United States which could be utilized to support terrorist activities.

Recently there have been two threats made against specific United States citizens. In late April 1986, Atif Abu Bakr, an Abu Nidal spokesman, made specific threats against several United States citizens including Lt. Colonel Oliver North, assigned to the National Security Council staff, and General (Ret.) John Singlaub. Another threat with international terrorism implications involved a letter addressed to Ambassador Herbert S. Okun, Deputy Permanent Representative, United States Mission to the United Nations. The letter, written by an unknown subject, stated that Okun was a target of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In situations such as these, the FBI has no specific legal authority to provide physical protection. The normal practice is to refer the threatened individual to the appropriate

state or local law enforcement agency. Meanwhile, the FBI will conduct the necessary investigation to determine the validity of the threat, and where applicable the identity of the terrorists. Every effort will then be made to prevent the planned attack. During 1985 the FBI was successful in interdicting 23 terrorist attacks, although none of that number involved international terrorist plots against United States citizens.

Some Federal agencies, such as the United States Secret Service, have authority to protect certain specified individuals, however the legal mechanisms for dealing with threats against most United States citizens are not currently established. Should the FBI be given such protective responsibility, it is easy to envision that considerable new resources would be required. Protective details, by their very nature, consume a large number of man hours. New, sophisticated equipment and training would also be necessary. At this point, given the dynamic nature of the terrorist threat, it is impossible to accurately project in monetary terms the size of enhancement to existing funding levels which would be required.